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THE LITTLE LIFE OF LINCOLN

In Short Stories

BY

WAYNE WHIPPLE

Author of
The Story-Life of Lincoln The Lincoln Story-Calendar
and the Lincoln Story-Annual

THE BIDDLE PRESS
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STORY I

BIRTH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

LINCOLN'S grandfather's name was Abraham. He came to Kentucky in the earliest pioneer days with his friend Daniel Boone. One day, in 1784, while he and his three sons were out in the clearing, Grandfather Lincoln was shot down by Indians in ambush.

The oldest boy, Mordecai, rushed into the cabin to get a gun. Josiah, the next in age, ran to the fort for help. Just as a huge Indian was stooping to pick up Thomas, a boy of six, Mordecai, aiming through a crack between the logs, shot the savage dead, and saved little Tom to become the father of Abraham Lincoln, the greatest man America has ever produced.

Thomas Lincoln married Nancy Hanks and they lived a year or so in a log hut at Elizabethtown, where their daughter, Sarah, was born. Then they moved about fourteen miles to Rock Spring Farm. In 1860 Lincoln wrote the following brief account of his birth:

> "I was born February 12, 1809, in then Hardin County, Kentucky, at a point within the now county of Larue, a mile or a mile and a half from where Hodgen's mill now stands . . . It was on Nolen Creek.
>
> *"A. Lincoln."*

THE HOME IN INDIANA

STORY II

TOM AND NANCY LINCOLN'S BABY BOY

DENNIS Hanks was Nancy Lincoln's cousin. He was several years older, and was young Abe's almost constant companion. Here is his account of Abe's early infancy (from *The American Magazine*):

"Tom an' Nancy Lincoln lived on a farm about two miles from us when Abe was born. I ricollect Tom comin' over to our house one cold mornin' in Feb'uary an' sayin' kind o' slow, 'Nancy's got a boy baby.' . . . I cut an' run the hull two mile to see my new cousin. You bet I was tickled to death. Babies wasn't as common as blackberries in the woods o' Kaintucky. . . .

"Folks often ask me if Abe was a good-lookin' baby. Well, now, he looked just like any other baby, at fust. . . . . An' he didn't improve none as he growed older. Abe never was much fur looks. I ricollect how Tom joked about Abe's long legs when he was toddlin' 'round the cabin. . . .

"Abe never give Nancy no trouble after he could walk, except to keep him in clo'es. Most o' the time we went bar'foot. . . . Abe was right out in the woods as soon as he was weaned, fishin' in the crick, settin' traps and drappin' corn fur his pappy. Mighty interestin' life fur a boy, but there was a good many chances he wouldn't grow up."

STORY III

IN THE "OLD KENTUCKY HOME"

AUSTIN Gollaher, an old, old man, still living twenty years ago, at Knob Creek, to which the Lincolns moved when little Abraham was four, used to tell how he once saved Lincoln's life. Austin had been brought by his mother, one Sunday, on a visit to Mrs. Lincoln, and the little boys wandered nearly the whole day along the creek. In trying to "coon it" across on a small log, Abe fell in and would have drowned if his playfellow had not reached a stick out to him, which he "grabbed with both hands." Old Mr. Gollaher continued:

"He clung to it and I pulled him out on the bank almost dead. I got him by the arms and shook him well, and then I rolled him on the ground, when the water poured out of his mouth. He was all right very soon. We promised each other that we would never tell anybody about it, and never did for years."

Mr. Gollaher also told that Abraham, even at that early age, was "an unusually bright boy at school. Though so young, he studied very hard."

Lincoln was once asked what he remembered of the War of 1812.

"Nothing but this," he replied. "I had been fishing one day and caught a little fish, which I was taking home. I met a soldier on the road, and having been always told at home that we must be good to the soldiers, I gave him my fish."

STORY IV

LINCOLN LOSES HIS MOTHER

WHEN Abraham was seven his father moved again—this time to Indiana. When they arrived at Little Pigeon Creek, near Gentryville, Thomas Lincoln put an ax in the boy's hands to help clear the brush and build a "half-faced camp," or shed made of poles throughout, and enclosed only on three sides. They lived under this poor shelter a year, until he, with the lad's help, had built a more comfortable log cabin.

Then Dennis Hanks came, with Thomas and Betsy Sparrow, his foster parents, to live in the half-faced camp until these relatives and Nancy Hanks Lincoln were stricken with a strange, malignant disease, called "milk-sick," which attacked the early settlers. In their crude, primitive way, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln were religious. Thomas Sparrow and his wife died and were buried first. Nancy Lincoln felt that her days were numbered. Calling little Sarah and Abraham to her bedside she told them to be good and take care of their father, and meet her in Heaven. With his whip-saw Thomas Lincoln made the three coffins from forest trees, and they were buried "without benefit of clergy." This troubled little Abe, and it is said that the first letter he wrote was to an old preacher who came the following summer and held funeral services over the lonely mounds in the woods.

Abraham seldom spoke of his own mother, but when he did it was with deep tenderness. He once exclaimed, "All I am or hope to be, I owe to my sainted mother."

STORY V

"WHAT IS HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER?"

EVERYTHING that a girl of eleven could do, little Sarah Lincoln did for that desolate family. Dennis, after losing his foster parents, came into the cabin to live with the motherless Lincoln children. But "what is home without a mother?" Thomas Lincoln became moody and restless. He went back to visit the scenes of his childhood, in Kentucky. After several weeks he returned, bringing his children a stepmother. She "made them look a little more human," as she expressed it. She induced her husband to lay a floor in the cabin, hang a door and cover the one window with oiled paper. She brought feather beds and other luxuries, and a bureau worth $40. She spread and hung bearskins and deerskins, and made the cabin quite cosey and comfortable.

Between Sarah Bush Lincoln and her stepson, Abraham, there sprang up a feeling of mutual understanding and sympathy. She persuaded her husband, much against his will, to let the lad go to school a month or two now and then. Abe never ceased to be grateful to her for her kindness to him. After her own son and stepson were dead, Mrs. Lincoln said of Abraham:

"I can say what scarcely one mother in a thousand can say, Abe never gave me a cross word or look. I must say that Abe was the best boy I ever saw or expect to see."

STORY VI

THE BOOKS YOUNG LINCOLN READ

ALTHOUGH Thomas Lincoln could see no use in "eddication" and thought Abe's hunger for reading was only a sign of laziness, Abraham devoured every book he could borrow within a circle of fifty miles. He learned the Bible almost by heart, and read the "Revised Statutes of Indiana" as eagerly as boys nowadays read "Sherlock Holmes." He read and re-read "Æsop's Fables," "Robinson Crusoe," "The Arabian Nights," "Pilgrim's Progress," and Weems's "Life of Washington." He had a strange experience in connection with this last named book. He had borrowed it from Josiah Crawford, who, for obvious reasons, was called "Old Blue-Nose." Young Lincoln read this book far into the night, and tucked it into a chink between the logs in the wall, before falling asleep. During the night a driving rainstorm soaked the mortar and book together, ruining the precious borrowed volume. Abe was almost in despair; "Old Blue-Nose" would be very angry. But the boy made a clean breast of the affair, and "Old Blue-Nose" graciously permitted him to work for the book three days, "pulling fodder," at the rate of 25 cents a day.

This Josiah Crawford must not be confused with Andrew Crawford, the schoolmaster. Abe always felt that Josiah took an unfair advantage of him, and had his revenge in writing doggerel rhymes about Josiah Crawford's nose.

STORY VII

SCHOOL DAYS FEW AND FAR BETWEEN

HE went to school in a little log cabin with oiled paper for window panes. Sometimes the distance he and his sister trudged was nine miles a day, over rough roads in winter weather. Yet it was a great privilege to the backwoods boy, whose father took him out on any excuse to earn a pittance at hard labor on the pioneer farms around them.

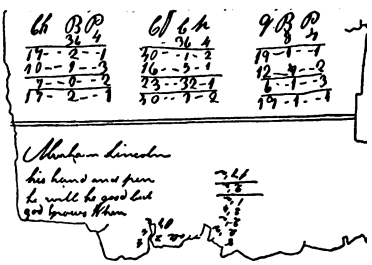
The lad soon excelled the more favored pupils about him. He always "spelled down," and his handwriting was so much better than the rest that he set copies for other boys. One of these has been preserved:

> Good boys who to their books apply
> Will all be great men by and by.

Abraham "took to" writing verses, considered a rare accomplishment in those pioneer days, and wrote compositions on cruelty to animals.

At the bottom of a leaf from his old home-made exercise book (for the boy never owned an arithmetic) are found these four facetious lines:

> "Abraham Lincoln,
> His hand and pen,
> He will be good
> But God knows when!"



STORY VIII

HOW THE LAD STUDIED

BUT Abraham was not daunted by lack of schooling. He had a great thirst for knowledge. He used to pore over an old dictionary by the hour, when nothing better was at hand.

He read and studied lying on the floor in front of the fire at night, making notes and ciphering with charcoal on an old wooden shovel, instead of a slate. His stepmother said he often covered every smooth surface under the tables, stools and benches, and planed them all off when he was able to get some paper on which he copied off his queer notes with a turkey-buzzard pen dipped in briar-root ink.

His father and many of the neighbors said Abe's studying at nights and reading while the horses rested at the ends of the furrows while plowing, were only signs of chronic laziness. They did not know Abraham Lincoln was the hardest worker of them all.

STORY IX

HOW LINCOLN EARNED HIS FIRST DOLLAR

"I HAD just built a flatboat," said Mr. Lincoln, "and was standing by it when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages, and looking at the different boats, singled out mine, and asked:

"'Who owns this?' I answered, 'I do.' 'Will you,' said one of them, 'take us and our trunks out to the steamer?'

"We have no wharves on the western streams, and passengers had to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping to take them on board. I was very glad to have the chance of earning a couple of 'bits,' so the trunks were put in my boat and I sculled them out to the steamer. They got on board and I lifted the trunks and put them on the deck. The steamer was starting off again when I called out:

"'You have forgotten to pay me!'

"Each of them took from his pocket a silver half dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money. You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, the poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day—that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that on."

STORY X

THE LINCOLN LAD'S GREAT STRENGTH

ABRAHAM had attained almost his great height when only fourteen years old. He was lank, tough and wiry, and many stories are told of his remarkable feats of strength while working for the farmers around the neighborhood.

At a "raising" he shouldered four great posts which four men were preparing to carry on "sticks" between them, and carried them all off at once. A neighbor used to say, "Abe Lincoln could strike with a maul a heavier blow and sink the ax deeper into a tree than any other man I ever saw."

One freezing night he and some friends, returning late from threshing, found a large, heavy man lying in the mud of the road, drunk. The others were for leaving him there, as they could not rouse him. To Lincoln, such an act seemed monstrous. He lifted the apparently lifeless body of the intoxicated man and carried him eighty rods to an empty cabin, where he built a fire and worked hard all night nursing the unfortunate man back to life and health.

With all his zeal and strength, Abe was able to earn only twenty-five to thirty cents a day, and his father always took and kept his hard earnings.

STORY XI

THE LINCOLN FAMILY'S REMOVAL TO ILLINOIS

AFTER Abe's return from a successful trip to New Orleans, in 1829, the Lincoln family received a cordial letter from Cousin John Hanks, inviting them to move to Illinois.

Thomas Lincoln had lived fourteen years in Indiana. That was a long time for this restless, roving spirit. He turned his farm over to Mr. Gentry, who held a claim against it, for the place was not yet fully paid for. He sold the stock and everything that could not well be moved, and set off with Abe, the stepchildren and their husbands and wives. Abe's own sister Sarah had been married and died within a year. They emigrated in a "prairie schooner" drawn by four oxen.

Abraham invested about thirty dollars in "notions" which he peddled on the way, and "about doubled his money," he afterwards wrote back. One evening about dusk, the weary, belated party missed a little dog after they had crossed a prairie stream filled with ice. The others were all in favor of leaving the little nuisance to its fate, but Abe, telling of it years afterwards said:

"I could not endure the idea of abandoning even a dog. Pulling off shoes and socks, I waded across the stream and triumphantly returned with the shivering animal under my arm. His frantic leaps of joy and other evidences of a dog's gratitude amply repaid me for the exposure I had endured."

STORY XII

THE FIRST HOME IN ILLINOIS

JOHN HANKS met the migrating Lincolns after their two weary weeks of plodding through muddy prairie and fording swollen streams, with a hearty welcome, and logs enough ready for their first cabin in Illinois, near where the city of Decatur now stands. There were seven men in the party, including Abe, who was "as strong as an ox," so they built the cabin without assistance from other settlers.

Abraham Lincoln was now past twenty-one years old. His father had exacted all his time and earnings, but the dutiful son did not leave the family in the lurch. He stayed until he could leave his father, stepmother and their numerous family settled and comfortable in their new home. Of this act Messrs. Nicolay and Hay, President Lincoln's private secretaries, wrote in their great ten-volume life of Lincoln:

"With the assistance of John Hanks he plowed fifteen acres, and split, from the tall walnut trees of the primeval forest, enough rails to surround them with a fence. Little did either dream, when engaged in this work, that the day would come when the appearance of John Hanks in a public meeting, with two of these rails on his shoulder, would electrify a State convention and kindle throughout the country a contagious and passionate enthusiasm whose results would reach to endless generations."

STORY XIII

STARTING OUT FOR HIMSELF

AVIDENTLY Abraham Lincoln did not even have a "freedom suit" of clothes when he struck out to make his own way in the world, for about the first thing he did was to split rails, for a man named Miller, for homespun enough to make him a suit of clothes, at 400 rails per yard!

The following winter (of 1830-31) was a terrible time—"the winter of the deep snow," in which many settlers and their stock died of cold and starvation and there was great suffering throughout the country.

The following spring Lincoln met Denton Offutt who hired him and two others to build a flatboat and take it to New Orleans. On the way down the Sangamon the boat lodged on Rutledge's dam at New Salem, and the denizens of that village saw "a young man with trousers rolled up five feet, more or less," wading about and contriving, with great ingenuity, to get the flatboat over the dam.

Of this second visit to New Orleans two doubtful stories are told of Lincoln: first, that a fortune-telling negress foretold that Lincoln would be President and free the slaves. The other was that he saw a light mulatto girl on the auction block in a slave market and said ("with a deep feeling of unconquerable hate"): "Boys, let's get away from this. If I ever get a chance to hit that thing (meaning slavery), I'll hit it hard."

STORY XIV

LINCOLN AND "THE CLARY'S GROVE BOYS"

LINCOLN returned to New Salem. While waiting for Offutt's stock to arrive, he was hanging about another store, where an election was being held. The tall stranger, on being asked if he could write, replied:

"Yes, I can make a few rabbit tracks."

He was recognized as the ingenious youth who had managed to get the flatboat over the dam, several months before, on its way to New Orleans. After a time, Offutt and his "general merchandise" arrived, and Lincoln was duly installed as clerk. His employer boasted so much of Abe's prowess that Lincoln was challenged to a match with Bill Armstrong, the leader of a rowdy gang from Clary's Grove settlement.

Abe's honor seemed to be at stake, so he was forced into the combat.

A ring was marked out and the two grappled. It seemed to be an even match until the "Clary's Grove Boys" tried to trip up the stranger. This enraged Lincoln—he seized the big bully by the throat, held him up and shook him as a cat would a rat. His strength and courage on this occasion did the work of years in establishing Lincoln in the high esteem of that community. The "Clary's Grove Boys" became his staunch friends, declaring then and there:

"Abe Lincoln's the cleverest fellow that ever broke into the settlement."

STORY XV

WHY THEY CALLED HIM "HONEST ABE"

ABRAHAM lived six years in New Salem and established his reputation for honesty, even in the smallest trifles. One night, while a clerk in Offutt's store, he discovered that a woman had paid him a sixpence too much, so he set off, after locking the store for the night, walking miles to return the sixpence. Another time he found, early in the morning, that he had given another customer four ounces of tea when eight had been paid for. So he walked several miles to deliver the rest of the tea before he could eat his own breakfast.

Mentor Graham, whom he had assisted at the election, was a schoolmaster. He advised Lincoln to study grammar, as many friends were then advising the tall clerk to become a candidate for State Legislature. Lincoln set off and borrowed a grammar, walking six miles and back in incredibly short time. He announced himself as a candidate, but the Black Hawk War broke out before election. Lincoln was elected captain, which gave him more real pleasure than any other honor ever conferred upon him. He saw no fighting in this war, did not meet Jefferson Davis (as is often stated), and returned just in time to be defeated—the only time he ever lost by direct vote of the people.

STORY XVI

STOREKEEPER POSTMASTER SURVEYOR

SOON after his return from the Black Hawk War an opportunity offered, and Lincoln went into the storekeeping business as one of the firm of Berry & Lincoln. Berry drank too much of the liquor they had in stock, and Lincoln, who had found a set of "Blackstone" in an old barrel of rubbish, devoted himself to studying law. While in this store Lincoln was appointed postmaster. The salary was small, but the privilege of reading the newspapers was one of the perquisites of the office. The tall postmaster used to tramp many a mile delivering letters—thus anticipating the modern "rural free delivery," and "special delivery," also.

Berry drank himself to death. The firm failed, the store "winked out," as Lincoln termed it, leaving him with his partner's and predecessors' debts, which he was too honest to evade, though he might easily have avoided payment. This great burden, which he called the "National Debt," weighed upon him for nearly twenty years, but he finally paid off "the uttermost farthing."

While Lincoln was debating whether to study law or learn the blacksmith's trade, John Calhoun, the county surveyor, offered him the position of deputy surveyor. He knew nothing about surveying but he procured a copy of "Flint and Gibson" and learned the science, with the aid of the good schoolmaster, Mentor Graham. He surveyed many of the towns in the neighborhood, and it is said that when Lincoln was surveying in a neighborhood, business stopped, and all the men of the place took a holiday, helping the county deputy for the sake of enjoying Lincoln's quaint quips and funny stories.

STORY XVII

LINCOLN'S "LOVED AND LOST."

WHILE boarding at Rutledge's Tavern, Lincoln became acquainted with Ann, the proprietor's lovely daughter, who, he soon learned, was engaged to be married to a young man called John McNeil. After her affianced had gone east to take care of his aged father, Miss Rutledge learned that his real name was McNamar. Although Lincoln appealed to her heart she felt bound by her engagement to McNamar, who had even ceased to write to her. Finally, after months of weary waiting, Ann Rutledge yielded to Lincoln's devotion, and they were believed to be betrothed. But the protracted strain proved too great for Ann's high-strung, sensitive nature. In August, 1835, she died, but her beautiful image never left the heart of Abraham Lincoln. He was utterly unstrung by his passionate grief. It was then that he learned to love the poem of William Knox, always thereafter a favorite, entitled:

"Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

William O. Stoddard, the only secretary to President Lincoln still living, writes of the grief-stricken lover at this time:

"When they came and told him she was dead, his heart and will, and even his brain itself, gave way. He was frantic for a time, seeming even to lose the sense of his own identity, and all New Salem said that he was insane. He piteously moaned and raved:

"'I never can be reconciled to have the snow, rain and storms beat upon her grave.'"

STORY XVIII

IN THE LEGISLATURE

IN 1834 Lincoln was elected to the State Legislature. His friend Smoot, a relative of the present Senator from Utah, loaned him $200—to make himself presentable at Vandalia, then the capital of Illinois. Lincoln was the leader of the "Long Nine," through whose influence the capital was removed to Springfield.

His fame as a political orator brought him an invitation to speak in Springfield, whither his staunch friends—"the Clary's Grove Boys"—went to applaud and look out for the rights of their hero and champion.

George Forquer, a wealthy and pompous politician of Springfield, once a Whig, had turned Democrat, and received a Land Office position worth $3,000 a year. Some one had pointed out Forquer's house to Lincoln, for it was furnished with the only lightning-rod in town. That night Forquer attacked the "young upstart from New Salem." Lincoln promptly responded:

> "That gentleman commenced his speech by saying that I must be taken down. I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and trades of the politician, but, live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, change my politics, and, with the change receive an office worth $3,000.00 a year, and then *feel obliged to erect a lightning-rod over my house* to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God!"

That lightning stroke blasted Forquer's political prospects.

STORY XIX

LINCOLN'S REMOVAL TO SPRINGFIELD

LINCOLN'S friend, John T. Stuart, who lent him books, and helped him study law, now offered to take him in as law partner as soon as he was admitted to the bar, which took place in April, 1837.

In March, that year, Lincoln sold his surveying instruments, packed his few clothes, books and other effects into his saddle-bags, borrowed a horse of Bowling Green, and left New Salem and all the friends he had found during six years' sojourn there. He hitched the horse before the store of Joshua F. Speed, who was destined to become his dearest friend.

"Say, Speed," he asked, "how much will a bed, blankets, and so forth, cost me?"

Speed reckoned it up. "Seventeen dollars or so," he said.

"I'd no *idee* 'twould cost half of that! I can't pay so much. If you can wait till Christmas, and I make any money, I'll pay you up; if I don't, I can't," was Lincoln's dubious reply.

Speed was struck with a sudden thought. "I've got a bed big enough for two. You're welcome to half of it till you can do better."

"Where is it?" asked Lincoln.

"Upstairs," said Speed, pointing; "turn to your right, over in the corner."

The newcomer went up. Speed heard the saddle-bags drop in the right corner. Lincoln came down, and said, with beaming face:

"Well, Speed, I've moved!"

STORY XX

THE YOUNG LAWYER'S STERLING HONESTY

STUART & Lincoln's partnership was dissolved in 1841, when Lincoln was invited to share in the more difficult and exacting business of Judge Stephen T. Logan, one of the greatest lawyers of the Springfield bar. A good story is told of him, while still a poor young attorney, how a bank cashier handed Lincoln $30,000 one day, "without a scratch of the pen," to use as a tender in a legal formality. And another of him, years after the closing of his country store, in New Salem, a government agent, tracing the former postmaster to Springfield, presented a claim for a little over $17 still due the United States from little New Salem post-office. Some friends, hearing the demand, and knowing something of the young lawyer's struggles through poverty and privations, and, alarmed at what they considered an unfortunate predicament, offered to help him pay the claim.

Lincoln said nothing; he went over to a corner of the office, pulled out his little trunk from under the old lounge on which he slept, fished out a cotton rag, opened it and counted out the exact sum demanded by the government official, in the same coins he had received, four or five years before, in New Salem, remarking quietly:

"I never use anybody's money but my own."

STORY XXI

THE BATTLE OF THE GIANTS

IN 1858 Lincoln was nominated to represent Illinois in the Senate, in Douglas's place. Lincoln challenged Douglas to join in a series of debates, and the "little Giant" reluctantly accepted.

Douglas began with a domineering, if not insulting, demeanor towards his almost unknown opponent. Lincoln's best friends thought his challenging Douglas was a grand blunder. But Lincoln was deeply, thoroughly, in earnest.

His sincerity, logic, quick-wittedness and good nature won the day. He often parried and turned back Douglas's savage blows like a boomerang. Douglas propounded a set of questions for Lincoln to answer. Lincoln answered these and asked Douglas several questions. Among these was one which forced Douglas to interpret the Dred Scott decision. Douglas walked right into Lincoln's trap. He answered "the Freeport question" to suit his hearers in Illinois, but offended the South—for the whole country was now breathlessly watching the struggle.

Douglas was elected to the Senate.

Lincoln took his defeat gracefully. He did not pretend that he was not disappointed. He said he was "like the boy that stumped his toe—it hurt too bad to laugh and he was too big to cry."

STORY XXII

HOW THE RAILS WERE BROUGHT IN

AFTER the great debates, Lincoln was invited to follow Douglas with a series of speeches in Ohio. He was also engaged to speak in Cooper Institute, New York City. This speech was one of the greatest triumphs of his career. In it he replied to some of Douglas's sophisms, and virtually silenced the statements regarding John Brown and the "Black Republicans." He made speeches in New England, and when he returned home he was greeted as the Republican candidate for the presidency. He laughed at the idea—"in preference to Seward, and Chase, those justly distinguished and popular representatives of the party!"

But the Republican Convention of Illinois, after John Hanks marched in with two little black walnut rails from Sangamon bottom, stampeded for Lincoln, as the party's only choice in his State.

There was a grand gathering of the clans and factions at Chicago. Judge David Davis and Norman B. Judd were in charge of the Lincoln "boom," as it would now be called. It was deemed necessary, by those astute politicians, to make a bargain with the Cameron delegation from Pennsylvania to insure Lincoln's nomination. This necessity was reported to him at his home in Springfield but he promptly telegraphed back:

"I authorize no bargains and will be bound by none."

STORY XXIII

NOMINATED AND ELECTED PRESIDENT

THE Convention that met in the specially built "Wigwam" at Chicago, in May, 1860, nominated Abraham Lincoln (even over Seward, the great statesman and party leader) gave over to frenzied demonstrations of joy, which caught and spread over the North like a prairie fire.

A committee notified the candidate in his plain home in Springfield. Friends offered to supply liquors for refreshment on that occasion, but Lincoln said:

"No, we have never had such things in our home and I am not going to begin now."

A native of England, a Springfield neighbor of Lincoln, was astonished when he heard of the nomination, and exclaimed:

"What! *Abe Lincoln* nominated for President of the United States? A man that buys a ten-cent beefsteak for breakfast, and carries it home himself. Can it be possible?"

Manufacturers all over the country made him presents of hats and other articles of apparel. Mr. Lincoln laughed at these gifts and, one day, exclaimed:

"Well, wife, if nothing else comes out of this scrape, we are going to have some clothes, aren't we?"

Election day fell on the 6th of November. Lincoln spent the evening in the telegraph office. He seemed gratified when he heard New York had gone for him—but expressed keener satisfaction over the vote of his own precinct. About midnight he went home and, finding his wife asleep, aroused her with:

"Mary! *Mary!* MARY! *we're* elected!"

STORY XXIV

TAKING HIS PLACE AT THE HELM

MR. LINCOLN made a great many speeches on his winding way to Washington. At Philadelphia he raised a flag at Independence Hall. At Harrisburg, his son, Robert, lost, for a while, the bag containing his Inaugural Address. As he had no duplicate or copy of it in any form, and the time before Inauguration Day was so short, Lincoln was almost in despair. He met his friend Lamon (who accompanied him to Washington and became Marshal of the District of Columbia) and said:

"Lamon, I guess I have lost my certificate of moral character, written by myself. Bob has lost the gripsack containing my Inaugural Address!"

When he was escorted to the Capitol by President Buchanan, who was bowed with age, Lincoln towered above him, and seemed taller than ever. He was introduced to the people by his friend Baker. The President-elect, holding his hat in one hand and his Inaugural in the other, looked about in vain for a place to set his hat down. Senator Douglas, seeing his perplexity, stepped forward and took the hat from Mr. Lincoln, then said to the lady next to him:

"If I can't be President, I can at least hold his hat!"

STORY XXV

"THE WAR HAS ACTUALLY BEGUN"

WHEN Lincoln took the reins of government everything was in a chaotic state. The first perplexity was the news that Fort Sumter was besieged. The fort was forced to surrender after a valiant resistance of thirty-six hours.

The attack on Sumter aroused the North and the South. The Confederate war-cry was, "On to Washington!" The Northern slogan was, "On to Richmond!" The President called for 75,000 men, and the North responded:

"We are coming, Father Abraham!"

The Sixth Massachusetts Regiment was mobbed in Baltimore. Baltimore and Maryland officials waited on the President, begging him not to allow Maryland soil to be "polluted" by the feet of soldiers marching against sister States. Lincoln replied:

"We must have troops; and as they can neither crawl under Maryland, nor fly over it, they must come across it!"

Washington was in danger of attack and famine. People fled from the city. They advised Mrs. Lincoln to take her three boys and seek safety. She bravely refused to do this, saying:

"I am as safe as Mr. Lincoln, and I shall not leave him!"

STORY XXVI

DEATH OF WILLIE LINCOLN

WILLIE Lincoln was nearly twelve years old when he contracted a severe cold by being caught in a storm while out riding his pony. The physician did not consider his condition dangerous, and advised Mrs. Lincoln to go on with a grand reception she was preparing to give. Elizabeth Keckley, a seamstress, and a faithful servant in the White House describes the event as follows:

"During the evening, Mrs. Lincoln came upstairs several times, and stood by the bedside of the suffering boy. She loved him with a mother's heart and her anxiety was great. The night passed slowly; morning came and Willie was worse. He lingered a few days and died. . . . I assisted in washing and dressing him, and then laid him on the bed, when Mr. Lincoln came in. I never saw a man so bowed down with grief. He came to the bed, and, lifting the cover from the face of his child, gazed at it long and earnestly, murmuring:

"'My poor boy! He was too good for this earth. God has called him home. I know that he is better off in Heaven, but then we loved him so. It is hard—hard—to have him die!'

"Mrs. Lincoln was so completely overwhelmed with sorrow that she did not attend the funeral. The White House was draped in mourning."

STORY XXVII

LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

FOUR score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

STORY XXVIII

SIGNING THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

THE roll containing the Emancipation Proclamation was taken to Mr. Lincoln at noon on the first day of January, 1863, by Secretary Seward and his son Frederick. As it lay unrolled before him, Mr. Lincoln took a pen, dipped it in the ink, moved his hand to the place for the signature, held it a moment, then removed his hand and dropped the pen. After a little hesitation, he again took up the pen, going through the same movement as before. Mr. Lincoln then turned to Mr. Seward and said:

"I have been shaking hands since nine o'clock this morning [at the regular New Year's Reception] and my right arm is almost paralyzed. If my name ever goes into history it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it. If my hand trembles when I sign the Proclamation, all who examine the document hereafter will say, 'He hesitated.'"

He then turned to the table, took up the pen again, and slowly, firmly, wrote *Abraham Lincoln*, with which the whole world is now familiar. He then looked up, smiled, and said:

"That will do."

Abraham Lincoln

THIS IS HOW HE WROTE IT THAT DAY

STORY XXIX

LINCOLN AND STANTON

LINCOLN'S sense of humor and his long-suffering patience permitted him to see the good that was in the great War Secretary. While Dennis Hanks was in the White House on a "special mission," he saw Stanton blustering about, declaring that he could not, and *would* not, carry out certain instructions given him by the President. This made "Old Dennis's" blood boil, and after Stanton had gone he said to Lincoln: "Abe, if I was as big as you are, I would take *him* over my knee and spank him." The President replied, gently: "No, Stanton is an able and valuable man to this nation, and I am glad to bear with his anger for the service he can render the people."

Sometimes the President waived his instructions, letting Stanton have his way. On such occasions he would only shrug his shoulders and remark, quizzically:

"Well, you know, I never did have much influence with this Administration, any way."

But one day the President gave an order which the Secretary said could not be executed.

Mr. Lincoln said: "Mr. Secretary, it will *have* to be done." The wills of the two men had come into direct conflict. Lincoln's deep, blue-gray eye looked into Stanton's—and the impossible was accomplished. Stanton had at last met his master.

When the murdered President's great heart ceased to beat, in the little bedroom opposite Ford's Theatre, on the morning of April 15, 1865, it was the loyal and loving Stanton who closed his eyelids and tenderly whispered in the depths of his great grief for his fallen chief:

"He is the *Man* for the ages!"

STORY XXX

"THE FIRST AMERICAN"

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late the Nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief.
. . . I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time.
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame;
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

From Lowell's Commemoration Ode.

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